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# The SPECTATOR.

*Si mihi non animo fixum, immotumque ſederet,*
*Ne cui me vinclo vellem ſociare jugali,*
*Poſtquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit;*
*Si non pertæſum thalami, tedæque fuiſſet:*
*Huic uni forſan potui ſuccumbere culpæ.* Virg.

MONDAY, *November* 1. 1714.

**The following Account hath been tranſmitted to me by the Love-Caſuiſt.**

*Mr.* SPECTATOR,

‘HAving, in ſome former Papers, taken Care of the two States of Virginity and Marriage, and being willing that all People ſhould be ſerved in their Turn; I this Day drew out my Drawer of Widows, where I met with ſeveral Caſes, to each whereof I have returned ſatisfactory Anſwers by the Poſt. The Caſes are as follow:

‘*Q.* Whether *Amoret* be bound by a Promiſe of Marriage to *Philander*, made during her Huſband's Life?

‘*Q.* Whether *Sempronia*, having faithfully given a Promiſe to two ſeveral Perſons during the laſt Sickneſs of her Huſband, is not thereby left at Liberty to chuſe which of them ſhe pleaſes, or to reject them both for the Sake of a new Lover?

‘*Cleora* asks me, Whether ſhe be obliged to continue ſingle, according to a Vow made to her Huſband at the Time of his preſenting her with a Diamond Necklace; ſhe being informed by a very pretty young Fellow of a good Conſcience, that ſuch Vows are in their Nature ſinful?

(Price Two-Pence.)

‘Another enquires, Whether ſhe hath not the Right of Widowhood, to diſpoſe of her ſelf to a Gentleman of great Merit, who preſſes very hard; her Huſband being irrecoverably gone in a Conſumption?

‘An unreaſonable Creature hath the Confidence to ask, Whether it be proper for her to marry a Man who is younger than her eldeſt Son?

‘A ſcrupulous well-ſpoken Matron, who gives me a great many good Words, only doubts, Whether ſhe is not obliged in Conſcience to ſhut up her two marriageable Daughters, till ſuch time as ſhe hath comfortably diſpoſed of her ſelf?

‘*Sophronia*, who ſeems by her Phraſe and Spelling to be a Perſon of Condition, ſets forth, That whereas ſhe hath a great Eſtate, and is but a Woman, ſhe deſires to be informed, whether ſhe would not do prudently to marry *Camillus*, a very idle tall young Fellow, who hath no Fortune of his own, and conſequently hath nothing elſe to do but to manage hers?

Before I ſpeak of Widows, I cannot but obſerve one thing, which I do not know how to account for; A Widow is always more ſought after, than an old Maid of the ſame Age. It is

common

common enough among ordinary People, for a ſtale Virgin to ſet up a Shop in a Place where ſhe is not known; where the large Thumb-Ring, ſuppoſed to be given her by her Husband, quickly recommends her to ſome wealthy Neighbour, who takes a Liking to the jolly Widow, that would have over-looked the venerable Spinſter.

The Truth of it is, if we look into this Set of Women, we find, according to their different Characters or Circumſtances wherein they are left, that Widows may be divided into thoſe who raiſe Love, and thoſe who raiſe Compaſſion.

But not to ramble from this Subject, there are two Things in which conſiſts chiefly the Glory of a Widow; the Love of her deceaſed Husband, and the Care of her Children: To which may be added a third, ariſing out of the former, Such a prudent Conduct as may do Honour to both.

A Widow, poſſeſſed of all theſe three Qualities, makes not only a virtuous, but a ſublime Character.

There is ſomething ſo great and ſo generous in this State of Life, when it is accompanied with all its Virtues, that it is the Subject of one of the fineſt among our modern Tragedies in the Perſon of *Andromache*; and hath met with an univerſal and deſerved Applauſe, when introduced upon our *Engliſh* Stage by Mr. *Philips*.

The moſt memorable Widow in Hiſtory is Queen *Artemiſia*, who not only erected the famous *Mauſoleum*, but drank up the Aſhes of her dead Lord; thereby encloſing them in a nobler Monument than that which ſhe had built, though deſervedly eſteemed one of the Wonders of Architecture.

This laſt Lady ſeems to have had a better Title to a ſecond Husband than any I have read of, ſince not one Duſt of her Firſt was remaining. Our modern Heroines might think a Husband a very bitter Draught, and would have good Reaſon to complain, if they might not accept of a ſecond Partner, till they had taken ſuch a trouble-ſome Method of loſing the Memory of the firſt.

I ſhall add to theſe illuſtrious Examples out of ancient Story, a remarkable Inſtance of the Delicacy of our Anceſtors in Relation to the State of Widowhood, as I find it recorded in *Cowell's* Interpreter. *At* Eaſt *and* Weſt-Enborne, *in the County of Berks, if a cuſtomary Tenant die, the Widow ſhall have what the Law calls her Free Bench in all his Copyhold Lands,* dum ſola & caſta fuerit; *that is*, while ſhe lives ſingle and chaſte; *but if ſhe commit Incontinency, ſhe forfeits her Eſtate: Yet, if ſhe will come into the Court riding backward upon a Black Ram, with his Tail in her Hand, and ſay the Words following, the Steward is bound by the Cuſtom to re-admit her to her Free Bench.*

*Here I am,*
*Riding upon a Black Ram,*
*Like a Whore as I am;*
*And, for my Crincum Crancum,*
*Have loſt my* Bincum Bancum;
*And, for my Tail's Game,*
*Have done this worldly Shame;*
*Therefore, I pray you Mr. Steward, let me have my Land again.*

The like Cuſtom there is in the Manor of *Torre* in *Devonſhire*, and other Parts of the *Weſt*.

It is not impoſſible but I may in a little Time preſent you with a Regiſter of *Berkſhire* Ladies and other Weſtern Dames, who rode publickly upon this Occaſion; and I hope the Town will be entertained with a Cavalcade of Widows.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

Juſt publiſhed, in a neat Pocket-Volume,
**The Prince's Cabala: Or, Myſteries of State.**
Written by King James I. and ſome Additions in his Reign, and in Queen Elizabeth's. With Iſocrates's Diſcourſe to a Cyprian Prince, on Kingly Government, tranſlated from the Greek. Printed for R. Smith and G. Strahan at the Royal Exchange, J. Brown without Temple-Bar, J. Graves next White's Chocolate-Houſe in St. James's-ſtreet; and ſold by R. Burleigh in Amen-Corner. Pr. 2 s. 6 d.

**Richard Chamberlayne, Mercer, removed from** the Great Wheat Sheaf to the King's Arms (the new Houſe) on Ludgate Hill, ſelleth all Sorts of Silks, Silver and Gold Stuffs, &c.

*LONDON*: Printed by S. BUCKLEY in *Amen-Corner*, and J. TONSON in the *Strand*; where Advertiſements are taken in.